

We claim:

1. A thermoplastic polymer fabric comprising:

a plurality of continuous multicomponent filaments having a denier less than about 3 and comprising a first polymeric component and a second polymeric component wherein said second polymeric component comprises a majority of the outer surface of said

5 multicomponent filament;

said first polymeric component having been made from a first thermoplastic polymer having a melt-flow rate of at least 150 g/10 minutes;

said second polymeric component having been made from a second thermoplastic polymer having a melt-flow rate at least about 65% less than the melt-flow rate of the first  
10 thermoplastic polymer.

2. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 1 wherein said second thermoplastic polymer has a melt-flow rate at least about 75% less than the melt-flow rate of the first thermoplastic polymer.

3. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 1 wherein said second thermoplastic polymer has a melt-flow rate at least about 85% less than the melt-flow rate of the first thermoplastic polymer.

4. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 2 wherein said multicomponent filament is a bicomponent filament and has a sheath-core cross-sectional configuration wherein the second polymer comprises the sheath and further wherein the sheath component comprises substantially the entire outer surface of the multicomponent filament.

5. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 2 wherein said multicomponent filament has a striped cross-sectional configuration wherein the first polymer component is positioned between said second polymeric component and a third polymeric component; said third polymeric component comprises a polymer having a melt-flow rate similar to that of said second polymer.

6. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 2 wherein said first polymer comprises a propylene polymer and said second polymer comprises an ethylene polymer.

7. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 2 wherein said first polymer comprises a propylene polymer and said second polymer comprises a propylene polymer.

8. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 1 wherein said first polymer comprises a first olefin polymer having a melt-flow greater than 200 g/10 minutes and wherein said second polymer comprises an olefin polymer having a melt-flow rate less than about 50 g/10 minutes.

9. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 8 wherein said thermoplastic polymer fabric comprises spunbond fibers.

10. The thermoplastic polymer fabric of claim 3 wherein said first component comprises an olefin polymer and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyesters and polyamides.

11. A method of making multicomponent filament nonwoven web comprising:

selecting a first thermoplastic polymer and a second thermoplastic polymer wherein the melt-flow rate of the first thermoplastic polymer is at least three times the melt-flow rate of the second thermoplastic polymer;

5           melting and extruding said first polymer and said second polymer and forming multicomponent filaments wherein the second polymer comprises a majority of the outer surface of the multicomponent filament;

melt-attenuating the multicomponent filaments wherein the filament diameter decreases by at least 75%; and thereafter

10           forming an integrated nonwoven web from said multicomponent filaments.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of quenching said multicomponent filaments prior to melt-attenuating.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said multicomponent filaments are pneumatically melt-attenuated.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said multicomponent filaments are melt-attenuated with a draw force of at least 3 psig.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein said first polymer has a melt-flow rate at least about five times the melt-flow rate of the second polymer.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein said first polymer comprises a propylene polymer and said second polymer comprises an ethylene polymer.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein said first polymer has a melt-flow rate in excess of about 800 g/10 minutes.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein said first polymer has a melt-flow rate between about 200 g/10 minutes and further wherein the second polymer has a melt-flow rate between less than about 50 g/10 minutes.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said nonwoven web comprises a spunbond filament web.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein said nonwoven web comprises a meltblown filament nonwoven web.